

A LETTER to Monsieur N---, Professor of Divinity in the Protestant University of N---, from Monsieur Aymon, Chaplain to the late famous Cardinal Camus, Bishop of Grenoble.

To Inform all Men of Learning and Probity, of the Notorious Cheats of several Popish Authors, and of the Extraordinary Endeavours used at this Time, both by them and also by some misled Protestants, who agree together Calumniously to Ruin Monsieur Aymon; and to Deprive him by several Attempts, of some Manuscripts of great Importance, which were Entrusted with him in order to be Publish'd in Favour of the Protestant Countries, and for the Benefit of all the Reformed Churches.

S I R,

I Am not at all surpriz'd that our Popish Adversaries are bitterly incens'd against us, since they esteem us their declar'd Enemies. 'Tis their Interest to discredit us in the World, and to thwart, as much as they can, the Designs of all those that oppose them.

But it is very surprizing that Protestants, whose Religion, Conscience, and Zeal for the Publick Good, ought always to inspire them with Maxims of the greatest Probity, should be seduced, (as those are whom you mention in your last Letter) to such a degree as to give their Judgment in Matters of great Importance, against Persons of an honourable Character in our Communion.

I have receiv'd several Accounts of this Matter, much to the same Purpose with what you hinted, concerning the false Reports which have been spread against me in some Places in those Provinces, since

the Author of the *Republique des Lettres*, Published in his News of the Month of June last, an Advertisement, by which it appears that some Papists suspect that a Person lately come from Paris into Holland, has rob'd them of some MSS. of great Importance concerning Religion.

The Author of this Journal has prudently omitted the Character of any Particular Person; and I'm assur'd that he has even suppress'd what was most Calumnious in the Letter sent from France, which occasion'd his Publishing that Advertisement. Notwithstanding since some of your Acquaintance have taken me to be the Person, because of the Journey which I made last Year to Paris, I will give you some Hints of it, which you may communicate to your Friends, to take off the ill Impressions which the Impostures of our Adversaries, and of my Enemies in particular, among Protestants might occasion in *Christendoms*.

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I don't understand, Sir, why you do not quote the Article of the *Republique des Lettres*, as it is in the 691. Page of the Journal which I have by me. 'Tis thus Word for Word; " They have taken from hence (*Paris*) out of the King's Library, the last Council of *Jerusalem* held by the *Grecians*. It is one in *Folio*, nearly bound in red Leather, after the *Arabian* manner, and stamp'd with the Seal of the King's Library. It has for its Title '*Acme Op. de de Eia*'. We suspect this MSS. has been carried into *Holland*; and 'tis believ'd it is not the only one: But we have not been able yet to discover what the others are.

The Advertisement ends thus, without taking any Notice of the pretended Abjuration, which they unjustly charge me with in your Country, since they have been told that these MSS. are in my Possession. The Papists lament the loss of 'em, and are justly apprehensive of the use I may make of 'em; seeing they are not ignorant that those MSS. are very proper to confute them.

For which Reason I do not wonder, Sir, that our Adversaries had resolv'd to asperse me several ways, as soon as they heard that after my Return from *France*, I began to write more strenuously against their Religion than ever; by the help of several considerable MSS. dig'd up and communicated to me long since by some particular Friends, as will more fully appear by what follows.

In the mean time I would have you take Notice, how gross the Calumnies are which they have industriously spread in these Provinces, to wound the Honour of my Ministry. Sir, If you observe well all the Circumstances which attend those Slanders, you'll find them to be so groundless, that they could hardly impose even upon my most violent Enemies. The Deceit is so visible, that I'm sure no true Protestants, nor any who govern their Judgment by Christian Prudence and Wisdom, will suffer themselves to be deceiv'd by Reproaches of this kind.

But tho' the Malignity of this present Age should cast the thickest Darknels over Mens Eyes, 'tis certain that as long as any Men of Sense are left, they will never believe that I went Publickly to celebrate the Offices of the Roman Catholick Religion in *Paris*, in the Priestly Habit, and solemnly to offer Incense, with the Censer in my Hand, before Idols, in the Presence of some Thousands of People; upon the simple Report of a Letter sent into this Country Seven or Eight Months after I came from *France*, from a Certain Person who did not dare to Publish in the *Paris-Gazette* the fabulous History of my pretended Abjuration, which undoubtedly would have been very acceptable and useful to Popery, if this Impostor had found People as credulous amongst our Enemies in *France*, as he has done in this Country, among those of our Communion.

It appears, Sir, by the fatal Blindness of those who suffer themselves to be misled by such unjust Prejudices, that there is no Calumny, tho' never so evident, which the Passion of ill-designing Men will not sometimes set forth with an air of Truth. For this Reason, I will here lay before you several Things, which may serve to justify me before all sorts of Men, to instruct the Good, and to silence as much as possible the Enemies of our Religion, and all others who reproach me.

I will do it in a few Words, it being easy for me to persuade all Men of Judgment and Equity, that those Accusations of the Papists are mere Impositions, contriv'd by the most malicious of their Party; except only what they say as to my bringing several MSS. out of *France* into this Country, among which is also the Council of *Jerusalem*.

For 'tis false that that Council of the *Grecians* was clandestinely taken out of the King's Library whilst I was at *Paris*; neither is it true that it was ever mark'd with his Signet. Several People who have seen it in *Holland* can attest the contrary of what these false Accusers say: And if any one has a mind to examine it in the Place



Place of Safety where it now is, he may be convinced of the Truth of what I assert, and withal take notice of Three great Seals in that Volumn; very different from the *French King's*.

The First has the Stamp of the Eastern Emperor, whom we commonly call the *Grand Seigneur*, or the *Turk*. The Second is that of the *Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem*; and the Third, that of *Monfieur de Nointel*, Ambassador of *France*, who resided at the *Ottoman Court* in the Year 1672, and who sent the authoris'd Acts of that Council to *Monfieur Arnaud*, Doctor of the *Sorbonne*, to be produced against us.

This Doctor did not Publish them in his Treatise of *the Perpetuity of Faith*, till he had suppress'd several things which are in the Original; by the help of which I may prove in a little time, that our Adversaries of the *Romish* Communion in their Books of Controversy, have falsified part of those Attestations of the *Greeks* which they have Printed; and that the other part of them is not worthy of Credit.

The Proofs I have of this Sir, are so Authentick, that I am well assured there can no better be found to demonstrate, that the most Celebrated Popish Authors, make no scruple to pervert all sorts of Acts and Writings to destroy the Truth, to oppose our Religion, to establish their Erroneous Principles, and to palliate the Abuses of a Superstitious and Idolatrous Worship.

'Tis also very evident Sir, that this Council of *Jerusalem* was never amongst those MSS. which are generally seen in the *French King's Library*; because all the Attestations which his Majesty had sent him from the East, upon occasion of the grand Dispute about Transubstantiation, which has made, and does still make so much Noise in the World, were given to the Doctors of the *Sorbonne* and other Divines, who have kept them in Private Closets, where none but Persons of distinguish'd Learning and Merit, and who have a particular Interest, are permitted to come to see or examine those MSS. on which there's no Mark or Seal to distinguish whose they are, as there

is commonly in Publick Libraries; because they never entrust Writings of this nature to any Person without the greatest Precaution: Therefore 'tis impossible for any one to take 'em away, without the consent of those who have them in their Custody.

There's no Man of Learning who has been in the King's Library at *Paris*, but who knows and can attest, that tho' he has had sufficient Recommendations to be introduced into the Private Closet of that Library, and to see the Curiosities that are in it, with the Manuscripts that are lockt up, he has seen by experience that they never leave him a moment, nor take their Eyes off him.

If we consider further, that the Council of which we are speaking is a great Manuscript in *Folio*, so strongly Bound, that it can no wise be bent or folded, so as to conceal it. Does it not manifestly appear, that it is utterly impossible for a Minister who is a New Convert, whose Conduct is strictly observ'd, and on whom the *Papists* have continually their Eye, as on a suspected Person come from an Enemies Country, and introducing himself into the King's Private Closet, as a Protestant Minister should be able to carry off a large Folio, without being discover'd by the Keepers, who closely follow every one that comes into that place, or even by the *Swiss* Guards who stand at the Door?

Can it be reasonably supposed after all this, that a Minister Banish'd from *France* for his Religion, and a Profelyte as I am from the *Romish* Communion, should Address himself to the King's Library-Keeper, to represent to him, that having lately made a Publick Abjuration of the Reform'd Religion, as they suppose, in presence of Cardinal *de Noailles* Arch-Bishop of *Paris*, and made known to all the Clergy of *France*, of whom he is the Chief, they would shew me the Originals of the Confessions of Faith, which some particular *Greeks* being Brib'd by a Sum of Money, gave to the *French* Ambassadors to cover the Errors and Abuses of the *Romish* Church?

Must not the King's Library Keeper be depriv'd

depriv'd of all common Sense, to entrust me with these Papers which discover the Impostures which the Popish Doctors have made use of to deceive the Reform'd?

'Tis apparent, that this is more than enough to shew that I'm falsely accused of taking out of the King's Library, the Council of *Jerusalem* and the other M S S. which are so favourable for us. They who pretend that those Papers belonged to them, ought rather to say, if they would reason justly, that some of the *Popish* Doctors, whom they truly confided in, being convinced of their Arts and Impostures, do secretly endeavour to Establish and Propagate more and more our Holy Reformation; and not being able to Publish those M S S. with which they were entrusted, and that are so favourable for us, some of them had the dexterity to permit them to fall into our hands, that we might improve them without exposing to Persecution those, who the better to gratifie us and promote our Religion, will not yet publickly declare themselves against the Followers of Antichrist.

It naturally results from all this Sir, that the *Papists* cannot blame me without manifest Injustice, nor they of our own number, without the highest Ingratitude; for having by Concert with the *Nicodemus's* of the *Romish* Communion, carried off in the time of War, a kind of Spoil from the Enemies Camp, against whom we are oblig'd to fight by order of our Supreme Governours; and for endeavouring to make a good use thereof for the Edification of our Churches, and for confirming, by new Proofs, the most weighty and important Apologies of our Holy Religion.

And as to the Calumny rais'd by the *Papists*, concerning the pretended Abjuration they would charge me with, if it was in their Power; I am not oblig'd according to the Rules of Law, to confute what they bring against me Verbally without Legal Proofs: And I desire them to produce any such Evidence that can be admitted in any Court of Justice or elsewhere. But Sir, if they intend to Counterfeit any Writing to that Effect, I desire you would signify before

hand, to all who may be any wise concern'd therein, that God be thanked, I am furnished with all that's necessary for confounding any, who should be so Rash and Malicious as to bring such an Accusation against me. For which reason I will make no difficulty to impart to you some of the ways I could take to destroy all those Calumnies, without the least apprehension of any thing they can do to elude my Proofs. And besides, I have a great many other more considerable Arguments, whence I may draw what will be abundantly sufficient for my Justification, even with the most Incredulous, if the others be not enough. In the mean time, it were not Prudent for me to discover at first all the Engines I could use to subdue my Enemies and those of our Religion, in case they should resolve to drive me to my last Shifts.

I would have you to know therefore Sir, that I did not leave this Country without the consent of their High Mightinesses the States General, who were pleased to give me, not only a Passport, but also powerful Letters of Recommendation for my Security, even to the Territories of the Grand Seigneur, if my Affairs, and the Circumstances of the Times permitted me to go so far. Besides this, I was provided with two other Passports, the first whereof was Sign'd by the *French* King's Intendant, who was then at *Brussels*; and Counter-sign'd by the Governours of all the Fortified Places, in my way from *Holland* to *Paris*: No mention being made in any of them of the pretended Abjuration, about which they make all this noise: But on the contrary, my Name was express'd without concealing my Character or Qualities.

The other Passport which I have, is Sign'd by the *French* King's own hand, and Counter-sign'd by his chief Minister of State, with some Clauses which make it appear that his Majesty permitted me to go out of *France*, with the same Character I had when I went into it; and that I did not pass *Incognito* in my Return into these Provinces. For the Governours of *Senlis* and *Lille*, made me not only to appear be-  
fore



fore them, in the *Quality of a Minister*, to examine my Passport; but also the Governour of *Newport* entertain'd me Honourably at his House, the last Night I staid in the *French Territories*, because I was in the Company of a Brigadier of the King's Horse Guards, who was the Governour's intimate Friend.

This Brigadier whose Name was *Pinel*, and had been made Prisoner by the Troops of the States General, but releas'd on Parole, came with me the next day from *Newport* to *Ostend*; and from thence always accompanied me till I arrived in this Country; where he testified to several Persons, that I came with him from *Paris* to *Rotterdam*, owning my self a *Minister*, and entering my Name (in that Character) at all the Offices of the Travelling Coaches, and in all the Custom-Houses from the City of *Paris*, to the utmost Parts of the Kingdom.

Moreover it may be found, that I have Registred my Name and Surname, with the special Character of a *Protestant Minister*, in the Counter-Roll for Foreigners, at the House of Monsieur d' *Argenson*, Lieutenant General of the Government of the City of *Paris*: And that they always remain'd there without any alteration or change till the day I came from thence.

If they were not satisfied with this, I could add the Testimony of several very Creditable Persons in *Paris*, who frequently Din'd with me; namely that of some Bishops, Abbots, and other Ecclesiasticks, with whom I convers'd familiarly as a Minister, both in Private, and in the Publick Walks of *Paris*. Or if they had rather refer themselves to the Testimony of Philosophers and Mathematicians, I would direct the most Incredulous, to the *Hôtel de la Foy couronnée* in the *Rue de Richlieu*. I am fully perswaded, that there will be found a great many people of Merit and Learning among those who converse there daily, who will not scruple to affirm that they have often seen me there, and always in the Habit of a Protestant Minister: And that I was so far from concealing my Religion or Sentiments, that they have heard

me argue as strongly and powerfully against the Abuses of the Church of *Rome*, as if I had made Sermons, or defended Theses of Controversy in a free Protestant Country.

Besides the Testimonies Sir, of what I have done Publickly, I could produce others, were it necessary, of what I did privately with some good Protestants whom I discover'd at *Paris*. I found Means, not only to give Exhortations till the Eve of my departure, but also to distribute with my own hands to several of our Brethren, a good number of Writings which I Publish'd against the *Romish Religion*, and sent them into *France*, by the same way that I procur'd Three or Four Boxes full of Manuscripts to be brought from thence, notwithstanding all the Precaution us'd by those who search without any reserve whatsoever goes out of the Kingdom, and whatsoever comes in from Foreign Countries.

Now judge after all this Sir, if I ought to be troubled at the False Reports which may be rais'd to injure my Honour, or that of my Ministry, by the Imposture of a pretended Abjuration. For as to what they may say concerning the MSS which I brought from *France*, I have already made it appear, and will again more evidently demonstrate, if it be necessary, that they are mightily deceiv'd if they imagine that I could have them without the assistance of some very Creditable Persons in the *Romish Church*, who favour'd me with them of their own accord; preserving in their Hearts excellent Dispositions, and secretly forming advantageous Projects for our Holy Religion.

I can give you Sir at present, most Authentick Proofs of this, if you will give your self the trouble to peruse the MSS I have in these Provinces, which I keep in places of Safety, (which I'll inform you off when you please) to be used according to the good Intention of those that entrusted me with them.

What I have that is most considerable, whether Originals or Copies, came to me from *Rome* and *Italy*, where I labour'd Five or Six Years in Collating several Pieces. I  
also.

also employed some Persons to Copy at my own Charge, in several Libraries of Europe, and amongst others, in that of the Escorial of Spain. And I likewise found others who furnished me with Writings taken from the most secret Archives of the Jesuits. I had sent me two large Volumes in Folio, Written with the Hand of a Mandarin Jesuit, which confutes all the Works of Father le Compte, concerning Theology, Philosophy, Politicks, and the Rites of the *Chineses*, which have made so much Noise in *Christendom*, and still occasion so much trouble at the Court of *Rome*.

I have been employed a considerable while Sir, in decyphering and revising some very rare Manuscripts, and several most Curious Letters concerning the Council of *Trent*; of which, neither *Padre Paolo*, nor the other Historians have Publish'd the whole Intrigues, nor detected the principal Channels, as I shall demonstrate by a great number of Important Writings, as soon as I shall be able to set the Press to work upon this Subject.

Some of my intimate Friends have prevailed with me, to break off this Business for some Months, and to undertake to Publish forthwith, the Council of the *Greek Church at Jerusalem*, whole and entire, with other Pieces sent from the East; by means of which, I can plainly demonstrate the Knavery of the *Sorbonne* Doctors, who formerly imployed the Famous Monsieur *Arnaud*, to write against our most Learned Divines, and especially against Monsieur *Claude* of Happy Memory, Pastor of the Protestant Church of *Charenton*.

The Works of that Minister were confuted (as all the World knows) by a vast number of Attestations which the Clergy and Ambassadors of *France* found means to bring from all the Countries of the East, where there were Mercenary *Grecians* among the Patriarchs, Bishops, and other Ecclesiasticks, who forged Confessions of Faith so exactly Calculated to overturn the Doctrine of our Ministers, as to matters of Fact contained in the *Theses*, wherein our Religion is either compar'd with, or put in opposi-

tion to that of the *Grecians*, who are not in Communion with the *Latin Church*; that it was not possible for our Divines to demonstrate so clearly (as now I am in a condition to do) what is True, and what False, in that great number of Formularies of Doctrine, which have hitherto entangled the Managers of our Controversies.

You know Sir, that we have Printed at *Geneva* a Confession of Faith, under the Title of *The Faith of the Eastern Church*, to shew, that the *Grecians* who are independent of the Church of *Rome*, agree in the same Sentiments with us. The Popish Doctors who undertook the Charge against that Confession, and the *Grecians* Assembled in the last Council of *Jerusalem* under the Patriarch *Dositheus*, did not think it enough to disown it, but further asserted, that *Cyrill Lucar* Patriarch of *Constantinople*, never held the Opinions which are in that Confession of Faith Printed at *Geneva* under his Name; and that we attribute to all their Churches, by a mere Calumny, Sentiments which they have not.

This, Sir, is doubtless one of the most important Disputes we have ever had with those of the *Romish Communion*, and with the *Greeks* both at once. We pass for Impostors in all the Christian Churches of the East, as also among the Papists, ever since our Ministers quitted this Controversy. It was left undetermin'd, by reason our Adversaries produced the Council of *Jerusalem* aforesaid. The Patriarch *Dositheus* came and brought it himself to the *French Ambassador* at *Constantinople* in the Year 1672; whither he was forced to flee, being banish'd from *Jerusalem*. That Ambassador sent this Council to the Doctors of the *Sorbonne*, who put it into the Hands of Monsieur *Arnaud*, and he caused it to be Translated by a Friar of the Monastery of *St. Maur*. The *Benedictins* of his Convent have kept it ever since, till one of their Number falling under a Remorse of Conscience to see the Impostures of the *Grecians* and *Papists*, resolv'd at length to deliver it to me, under Promise



mise not to Name him when I should Publish that Work, with other Pieces which I have on that Subject.

I shall be able, Sir, to shew you this Council in the Original in a little time, but I can't lend it you at present, because I sent it some few Days ago to some of my Friends out of the *Hague*, to have their Advice about some Places which I had difficulty to Translate. In the mean time I desire you would let me have your Opinion of the Memorial I send you concerning the Judgment which I think ought to be made of the Patriarch *Lucan*, and his Confession of Faith; without regard to the different Relations that have been given of 'em; because we are oblig'd to produce truly authentick Proofs and Papers to terminate this Question; and not bare Conjectures or Probabilities, which have serv'd only hitherto to increase the Dispute.

I hope, Sir, the reading of this little Memorial will not be disagreeable to you, and that you'll find in it sufficient Reasons to convince you, that it was not without ground that that Patriarch made himself so famous both among the *Grecians* and *Protestants*, seeing he suffer'd strange Persecutions at *Constantinople*, together with the principal Clergy of his Patriarchat, for publickly defending our Doctrine.

You will also see in what manner he was Protected by the Ambassadors of the *States General*, who out of a holy Zeal for the Advancement of the Kingdom of Christ, sent at his Request a great number of good Books into that Country, very proper to induce both the *Grecians* and *Mahometans* to embrace our Religion.

The Court of *Rome* having notice of this, was so much alarm'd at it, that they left no stone unturn'd to depose that Patriarch. He was three times degraded; but he always found means to be re-established, 'till the Pope set the Jesuits to work, who have a Colledge at *Constantinople*, and furnish'd them with Money to bribe the *Grand Seigneur's* principal Officers, who caus'd him to be Martyr'd. By

this you may judge, Sir, how many difficult Questions I have to clear for unraveling that Matter, and making an Apology for what several of our Ministers have advanced concerning the Religion of the *Greeks*, who are not in Communion with the *Latin Church*, without having given any Authentick Proofs to silence our Adversaries.

I have good ground to hope that those I shall produce on the occasion of this Council of *Jerusalem*, shall be strong enough to confound them entirely, seeing I take them out of their own Works: Which Testimonies they cannot elude without confuting themselves.

I expect to see them more and more imbitter'd against me, according as they shall discover the Designs I have form'd to oppose them. I don't doubt but they will add Imposture to Imposture to discredit my Works; and that they will not scruple to dispatch me, were it in their Power, either by Sword or Poison.

They will not fail to send Emissaries into this Country to observe all my Motions, and to lay Snares for me on all sides. I understood some few Days ago that they have form'd a Design to Prosecute me, under Pretence that this Council of *Jerusalem* was taken out of the King's Library; and I don't question but the false Suppositions, by which they think to be able to colour their Demands, will tend to deprive me of that Manuscript, and several others, at any rate. They have sent from *Paris* a Procurator to some Persons at the *Hague*, to bring an Action against me on this Account.

I don't yet know if there will be found amongst us any so rash and foolish as to undertake it. I am, God be thanked, in a condition to mortify all those who shall be so ill-advis'd as to engage themselves in a pursuit of this nature. I can indeed assure you, Sir, that all the Attempts of the Papists, and all the Malice of their Abettors, of what Quality soever, don't give me so much Uneasiness, as I am troubled to see the ill Disposition of some of our Brethren, who

who are too ready to give Ear to the Calumnies of our most cruel Enemies ; and who, through excess of Imprudence and Ingratitude, join with my Adversaries, even at the time that I am labouring at the Hazard of my Life, about Things which contribute no less to their Honour and Advantage, than to the Support of the Religion which they outwardly Profess with us.

The ill Conduct of those Men, Sir, is so Prejudicial to the Interest of our Churches, and the Good of this Country, that I cannot enough wonder at the little Zeal there is amongst us to advance the Kingdom of Christ ; nor comprehend why they suffer New Converts to be unjustly Persecuted in our Churches, and miserably Oppress'd by Papiſts, whom some Persons of our Communion are not asham'd to assist, there being hardly any one Protestant to be found, who will either Defend them, or Encour-

age them in their Sufferings. Can any Thing be seen more strange, or more remote from True Christianity !

For my part, Sir, I have had the Happiness, in every Condition, to meet with Persons of distinguish'd Merit, who Favour'd me with their Powerful Protection : And to conclude, I must own that next to the Divine Assistance, which Supports me in all my Sufferings, I am oblig'd to reckon you among the Number of those who afford me the most solid Consolations, to sweeten and allay the Sorrows which happen to me in the whole Course of my Life. And therefore I wish that all my Actions may contribute something to the Pious Designs of your Apostolical Zeal, under the Favourable Protection of this Powerful and Flourishing Government ; and withal may serve to testify the Acknowledgment and Respect with which I am,

S I R,

Your most Humble,

and Obedient Servant,

J. Aymon, Minister.

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